

Dear Councilmember McDuffie:

My name is Minnie Perkins- Plater, and my husband, Christopher Plater, and I, strongly oppose the expansion of the Big Bear Cafe.

I grew up in the 100 Block of R Street, NW, and I have lived here for the majority of my life - first at 113 R St, N.W., and later, right next door at 111 R St, NW, where I moved when I got married 9 years ago. This has always been a neighborhood with a family atmosphere, a place where I felt comfortable and happy as a child, and where I felt comfortable and happy after I got married and had my daughter. Unfortunately, that family feel has changed drastically with the opening of the Big Bear Cafe.

I live just a few doors away from the Cafe. It opened with a seemingly benign presence --a few patrons sitting on the patio drinking tea and lattes and surfing the Net. However, its innocuous beginning was no indication of what it would soon become. Before we knew it, the Cafe had secured a liquor license. Along with that came more patrons, parking problems, more trash, and more noise.

Not only are these the kinds of problems that I and other residents hoped to avoid, they are the kinds of problems that our parents who moved here 40 or more years ago, also hoped to avoid. Since the Cafe obtained its liquor license, parking has become a big problem -even more so, now that the Cafe has managed to have the residential parking sign in front of its business removed. The owner also managed to obtain a permit to have an open-air farmer's market on Sundays,

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and that closes off our entire block. There is no parking during that time.

Sundays used to be a day of worship and relaxation. Now, it has become a day of stress and hardship. After church, we are forced to park blocks away and then carry groceries, car seats, and anything else that we may have. However, the concerns and needs of the residents of the 100 block of R St., NW, are not important to the Big Bear Cafe owner.

The streets have become more congested with revelers who leave the Cafe after an evening of drinking; and, unfortunately they are not concerned with maintaining the beauty and tranquility of our neighborhood. There is more trash and more noise. There has been a commercial establishment at the Cafe location before - a small corner grocery. It did not attract the noise and congestion that the Cafe does. Further, we knew and were friendly with our neighbors who patronized the corner market. There was a time when everyone in our block knew one another and we knew passersby who lived close to us. Now, there are strangers in our block who frequent the Cafe, but make no effort to know members of the community, nor do they add anything positive to our formerly wonderful block.

If the residents of R Street stand by passively and do nothing about the expansion of the Big Bear Cafe, it is likely that we will witness the loss of what is left of the family-oriented feeling of our block, and we will see even more unwanted, unneeded development. This development will not only destroy the remaining peace and tranquility of our block, but it will change the face of R Street forever.

For these reasons, I implore you to prevent the expansion of the Big Bear Cafe.

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard on this important matter.

Minnie Perkins-Plater

Christopher David Plater

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